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Miami Co. investigates vote centers **(<http://kokomotribune.com/local/x2056621320/Miami-Co-investigates-vote-centers>)**

Officials assemble committee to conduct six month study.

By Carson Gerber

Tribune staff writer (<http://kokomotribune.com>)

Peru — Miami County officials are assembling a committee to look into implementing vote centers in the county, which officials say would make voting easier and more convenient for residents.

Vote centers do away with precinct polling places, and allow residents to vote at any polling place in the county over an extended period of time.

Paul Wilson, deputy of voter registration, said the county is putting together a team that includes elected officials, experienced poll voters and technology experts to discuss details on how vote centers could be implemented.

He said the committee will look into possible locations for the centers, technology challenges, how to set up early voting and also conduct a cost analysis.

“These meetings aren’t going to be a coffee and doughnuts time to fellowship,” he said. “We’re going to be rolling up our sleeves and tackling the issues.”

Clerk Tawna Leffel said the committee will meet six times over six months, and formulate an official plan which will be presented to the state by the fall. The plan must first be approved by the county council, commissioners and the election board.

“As we form a plan to move forward in this process, we believe it is important to garner the support of our voters, and to compile valuable feedback from those who have some form of expertise in the voting process,” she wrote in letter inviting elected officials to join the committee.

Wilson said there are problems involved in both paper ballots and voting machines, and vote

centers could be the best solution.

“Perhaps the vote center concept can iron out some of those bugs we’re having with electronic voting by spreading out voting over a period of time, and by having fewer poll workers who are more highly trained,” he said. “We’ll see.”

The state allowed counties the option of implementing vote centers in 2011 after conducting a three-year feasibility study in Wayne, Tippecanoe and Cass counties.

Carson Gerber is a Kokomo Tribune reporter. He can be reached at 765-854-6739, or by email at carson.gerber@kokomotribune.com.